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PRESS RELEASE

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Senior Program Manager With the Office of Personnel Management Pleads Guilty to Stealing More Than \$40,000

WASHINGTON - William D. Cunningham, 59, a senior program manager with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), pled guilty today to theft of public money for stealing more than \$40,000 from OPM last year, announced U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. and Patrick E. McFarland, Inspector General for the Office of Personnel Management.

The plea was entered before the Honorable Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly, in U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia. Cunningham faces a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. He is to be sentenced on June 6, 2011.

As part of the plea agreement, Cunningham agreed to pay full restitution. Cunningham, of Fredericksburg, Va., also agreed to resign from OPM by the time of his sentencing.

OPM is a federal agency that, among other things, administers the Civil Service Retirement System (CSRS) and the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS). These federal programs are administered by OPM's Retirement Operations for Retirement and Benefits (OPM/Retirement Operations) through CSRS and FERS in Washington, DC. OPM/Retirement Operations delivers benefit payments of more than \$68 billion each year to more than 2.5 million retired federal workers, their survivors, and other beneficiaries. Within OPM/Retirement Operations, management and program analysts are primarily responsible for processing retirement and related actions for the CSRS and FERS retirement programs for federal workers throughout the country. These actions include, among others, processing new claims for regular retirement, disability retirement, survivor, and former spousal annuity benefits, and providing a broad range of retirement account maintenance services.

Cunningham has been an employee with OPM since December of 1974 and a program manager with OPM/Retirement Operations since November of 2004. He has been a supervisor at OPM since 1983. His official duties included reviewing and authorizing various one-time payments made to annuitants or payees for annuitants by OPM/Retirement Operations.

According to the Statement of Offense filed in court today as part of the guilty plea, Cunningham was able to arrange for and successfully complete five separate unauthorized payments because of his responsibilities within the OPM/Retirement Operations office. Cunningham had the access, ability and authorization to make computer entries on the OPM/Retirement Operations computer system, which allowed him to make these one-time payments to his personal bank account under the name of otherwise legitimate federal retirees.

The payments took place between April 23, 2010 and August 12, 2010, totaling \$40,388. The Statement of Offense noted that Cunningham was subsequently interviewed by members of the OPM Office of Inspector General's Office and admitted to using his knowledge of the OPM retirement system to authorize payments from legitimate retirees' accounts to his personal checking account and also admitted that he knew what he had done was wrong.

In announcing today's plea, U.S. Attorney Machen and Inspector General McFarland praised the outstanding work of the investigative agents involved in this matter, especially Suzanne J. Saleh and Shantel R. Robinson, Special Agents of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, Office of the Inspector General, as well as members of the OPM/Retirement Operations staff. They also acknowledged the hard work of Paralegal Specialists Mary Treanor and Jared Forney, and Assistant United States Attorney Glenn S. Leon, who prosecuted the case.

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